

Reservists help at base fire department

Story and photo by
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It's 8:34 on a Monday morning at RAF Lakenheath, and people are just starting their new workday.

In a span of moments, three separate alarms sound at the fire department and seven reserve firefighters from the 910th Civil Engineer Squadron, from Youngstown ARS, Ohio, along with British and active-duty counterparts from the 48th Fighter Wing, spring into action to respond to exercise scenarios.

The first alarm is a structural incident involving a boiler room at the school. The second is an inflight emergency involving an F-15 fighter that lost engine compression during routine training. The aircraft makes it back to the flightline without incident. The third is a fuel spill from a C-5 aircraft that just landed.

"Just another normal day here at Lakenheath," said Mark Smith, a leading firefighter for the British contingent at Lakenheath. "We're always busy!"

"Our guys are used to what's going on here," said TSgt. Mark Patsko of the 910th CES fire department.



TSgt. Elliot Rodriguez and SSgt. Andrew Mabie, 48th Fighter Wing fire department, team up to help victim SrA. Dan Cole, 910th CES reservist, following a simulated F-15 crash.

partment. "Most of them are professional and volunteer firefighters where they live. The only disadvantage we have is that we're not used to the flightline here, and where the barriers are located."

The 910th CES firefighters also participated in simulated joint training exercise involving F-15 mock-up drill with the fire team from Lakenheath and local British firefighters from the surrounding communities.

"We place a lot emphasis on community awareness around here," said fire chief Paul Giles, who is assigned to Lakenheath on a statutory career tour from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. "We want the communities here to know what to do if one of our planes goes down."

When the reservists were not participating in mock-up exercises or responding to actual alarms, they were busy getting certified in hazardous materials training.

"A lot of our guys are either EMT or crash and rescue trained," said SSgt. John Hickey, a 910th CES reserve firefighter. "Some are trained in both, but everyone must be certified in HAZMAT."

"We tell our guys to just get the reservists where they have to go in an emergency situation," said CMSgt. Dwayne Painter, deputy fire chief for Lakenheath. "They'll know what to do. Some of them work in actual fire units and have a greater experience level when fighting fires."

The base fire department is currently manned at 102 members, but people are deployed to other countries for 120 day increments, said Giles. The department has people in Bosnia, Hungary, Italy, and Honduras, as well as 11 people to Silver Flag.

"We need these reservist here to backfill for our people that are deployed," said Giles.

Each reserve member deployed from the 910th CES served a 24-hours on, 24-hours off duty day, while the British members worked one-day on, three-days off.

Giles said, "The one-day on, three-days off applies to our British firefighters because a lot of them are volunteers for their local communities who get paid by the call."

Legal teams debate sides of law

By Capt. Jennifer Dickey
Legal office

Two legal teams, representing both English and American sides of law, met to debate legal reform Monday in London.

The U.S. team, having triumphed in debates held in Washington D.C., New York, and Harvard Law School, Boston, emerged as the overall victor in the four-part series of debates presented by the Federal Bar Association of America.

The American team consisted of: attorney Mark Tuohey III, who served as deputy independent counsel in the Whitewater investigation; criminal defense attorney F. Lee Bailey; Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree; and Judge Eugene R. Sullivan of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces.

During his introduction of the American team, William J. Crowe, U.S. Ambassador to England and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarked on the timeliness of

the event with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of U.S. Law Day Thursday.

The audience consisted of 100 American and English legal practitioners, included judge advocates from 3rd Air Force, RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, who attended the debate as part of their Law Day activities. The audience decided the victors in each debate.

With a 77 to 23 victory, the English team enjoyed its largest margin of victory in the debate on whether juries should decide the amount of money to be given to the plaintiff in tort suits. A tort is a civil injury, other than a breach of contract, for which a court awards damages.

Unlike the American legal system, English judges decide the amount of damages. Citing a recent U.S. jury decision to award \$3 million to a plaintiff burned by MacDonald's coffee, Michael Hill, an English litigator and expert on fraud trials, argued that the emotion and prejudices of juries take over when they are asked to decide the consequences of a finding of liability. In response, Mark Tuohey argued

that the jury should be viewed as a political institution giving voice to ordinary citizens to set the norms for society.

A recent change in English law, which permits a jury to consider a criminal defendant's failure to answer questions or give evidence at trial, prompted vigorous arguments from both teams in a debate on a criminal defendant's right to silence. Decrying the English reform as a "step backwards," Bailey argued that permitting comment on a defendant's assertion of the right to silence effectively gives "a right to a citizen and puts a price on it, which wipes away the right."

In response, Judge Brian Capstick remarked that the impetus for reform arose from English juries who "became fed up with something that ran contrary to their feelings of common sense."

Bailey's argument gave the American team its only win with a 66 to 31 vote.

Sullivan, who organized the debate, was invited as the guest of honor at the Law Day reception held by 3rd Air Force Thursday.